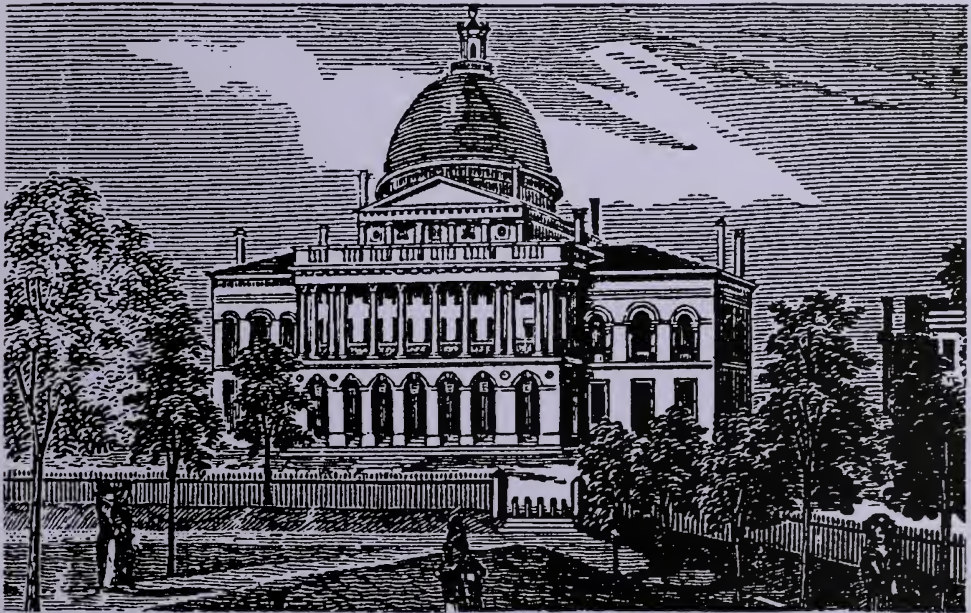


MS. 3512 MS. 7/116

The Massachusetts State House

A guide to a walking tour and
a short but interesting history
of the building



Published by
William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth
State House Tours and Government
Education Division

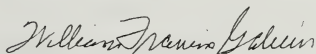
Welcome to the State House!

The magnificent setting of our state government for almost two centuries has become an outstanding museum reflecting the history of Massachusetts since colonial times. Its spacious marble-floored corridors are lined with the portraits of Massachusetts governors and murals depicting our state's unique heritage. Adams, Hancock, Revere, and Winthrop live on in statues and paintings recreating the glory of their times.

Of course, the State House is also a vital place of work for the leadership who guide our state today. You are welcome to observe the Senate and House of Representatives as they convene in their handsomely-appointed chambers.

Past and present are partners in the Massachusetts State House. I cordially invite you to walk through this grand old building with a guided tour or on your own, and hope that your visit will be enjoyable, informative, and memorable.

Sincerely,



William Francis Galvin

Secretary of the Commonwealth





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2014

https://archive.org/details/massachusettssta00mass_6

"The hub of the solar system..."

The Early State House

In 1713 the seat of the Massachusetts government was the old State House at the corner of King (now Washington) and State streets. After the American Revolution, state leaders wanted a larger and more elegant home to better reflect the prosperous new republic, spacious enough to accommodate an expanding government.

They selected a superb site for the new State House close to the summit of the south side of Beacon Hill, overlooking Boston Common and the Back Bay. The land had originally served as a cow pasture for the Revolutionary patriot and governor John Hancock.

A young native-born architect, Charles Bulfinch, was chosen to design the building. Bulfinch was a public-minded citizen who had served Boston as a selectman. The many buildings he designed in Boston made a strong mark on the character of the city. He later contributed to the plans of the Capitol in Washington.

The Bulfinch State House was completed on January 11, 1798 and was widely acclaimed as one of the more magnificent and well-situated

buildings in the country. Its dome dominated the Boston skyline until the advent of the skyscraper.

The State House Today

Today, the Massachusetts State House is the oldest building on Beacon Hill. The building and its grounds cover 6.7 acres or about two city blocks. The Bulfinch Front faces south, its red brick walls, white pillars and trim, and golden dome catching the sun in every season.

On the grounds below the central colonnade are statues of orator Daniel Webster, educator Horace Mann, and Civil War General Joseph Hooker. In addition, the somber figures of Anne Hutchinson and Mary Dyer religious martyrs of colonial days, have been placed on the lawns below the two State House wings.

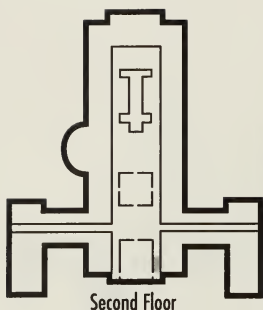
The latest addition to the grounds is a statue (pictured at right) of John F. Kennedy, the 35th President of the United States. A gift from the people of Massachusetts, it was dedicated on May 29, 1990 and is located in the west wing plaza.



The old State House

Oliver Wendell Holmes called the State House "the hub of the solar system, though time has altered the statement and it is now remembered as "Boston is the hub of the universe." Today, Boston, not the State House, is called "The Hub."





Second Floor

The State House cornerstone was laid on the Fourth of July, 1795, by Governor Sam Adams and Paul Revere, Grand Master of the Masons. The stone was drawn by fifteen white horses, one for each of the states of the Union at that time. The cost of the original building? \$133,333.33



A walk through the State House

Your tour begins at the State House model in the entryway just outside Doric Hall.



The State House Model

The model of the 1798 State House, or Bulfinch Front, is an accurate representation, lacking only the chimneys and side entrances which were removed in the mid-1880s. The major difference between the model and the building at that time is the color of the dome. Paul Revere & Sons coppered the dome in 1802 to prevent water leakage. Some seventy years later the dome was gilded with 23 carat gold leaf for the first time. The cost was \$2862.50; the most recent gilding, in 1969, cost \$36,000.

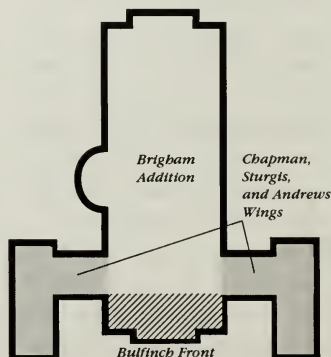
Most of the wood used to build the original Bulfinch Front came from Maine, which was a part of Massachusetts until 1820. The pine cone atop the cupola above the dome symbolizes the importance of the lumber industry to the early New England economy.

Just eighty years after its dedication, the State House proved to be too small.

The legislature defeated a proposal to build a new state house in the geographic center of Massachusetts, and voted instead to expand the existing one.

A large extension, built of yellow brick, was added to the back of the Bulfinch State House between 1889 and 1895. It was designed by Charles Brigham, who made extensive use of marble, wrought iron, and carved wood paneling in the elegant interior.

The most recent additions, which were completed in 1917, are the two white marble wings to the east and west of the State House. They were designed by William Chapman, Robert Andrew, and Clipson Sturgis. They contain many of the House and Senate offices.



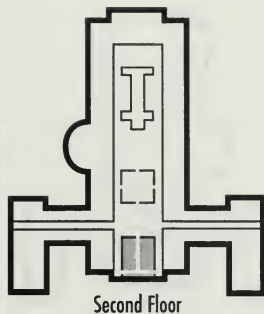
2 Doric Hall

Doric Hall derives its name from the architectural style of its ten columns. It is located two floors beneath the dome and its appearance, although close to the original, was changed by the major restoration of the Bulfinch Front at the turn of the 20th century. The original Doric columns were pine tree trunks which were carved on the front lawn of the State House. The present columns, installed as a fire-proofing measure, are copies made of practical iron and plaster.

As a main reception room, Doric Hall has served as the setting for uncounted formal and informal gatherings including banquets, press conferences, swearing-in ceremonies, and other special events. It was here, at the beginning of the Civil War, that arms, ammunition, and other equipment were distributed to company after company of volunteers to the Sixth Massachusetts. The men of the Sixth assembled in front of the State House and received their colors from Governor John Andrew; the units, which arrived on April 19, 1861 in Washington D.C., were the first organized military assistance President Lincoln received in the Civil War.

Doric Hall contains portraits, statues, and military artifacts recalling many periods of Massachusetts history. The 1826 marble statue of George Washington by Sir Frances Chantrey was the first to be placed in the State House. Governor Andrew is memorialized in Thomas Ball's marble sculpture, located to the left of Washington. Across the room is a rare full-length portrait of Abraham Lincoln, painted around 1900 by Albion Bicknell.

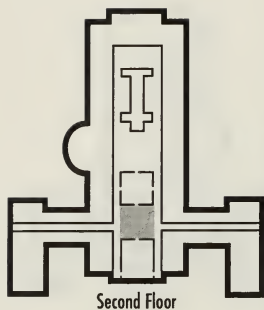
The two cannons beneath the Lincoln portrait commemorate the Concord Minutemen at the Battle of the North Bridge on April 19, 1775. The cannons on the opposite wall were used by the British East India Marine Company and are said to have been captured in the War of 1812. Between these cannons is a bronze bust of John Hancock, the first signer of the Declaration of Independence and the first governor elected after the adoption of the Constitution of the Commonwealth in 1780.



Wrote a visitor to the State House in 1809: "It is a superb building and stands very High. I ventured up to the First Balcony, and tho' I risked a fit of Gout by it, yet I was very much gratified by one of the most grand, picturesque and extensive Views that I have ever seen."

The golden dome of the State House serves as the official location of Boston to mapmakers. A sign that says "50 miles to Boston" really means fifty miles to the golden dome.





A native of Haverhill, Major General William Francis Bartlett was a hero to both the North and the South. Named a general at the age of twenty-four, he was wounded four times and lost his left leg in the battle of Yorktown, but continued to lead his troops. The statue of William Francis Bartlett was dedicated on the 41st anniversary of the Battle of Port Hudson on May 27, 1904. It was initially placed in the Hall of Flags.



Nurses' Hall

Climbing the stairs at the end of Doric Hall you will leave the 1798 Bulfinch Front and enter the 1895 Brigham addition to the State House. The small hall you have entered contains a Daniel Chester French bronze statue of the Massachusetts Civil War hero, William Francis Bartlett.

The next, larger room, built largely of Pavonazzo marble, is called Nurses' Hall because of the statue of an Army war nurse located on your right. Sculpted in 1914 by Bela Pratt, it was the first statue erected in honor of the women of the North after the Civil War.

Nurses' Hall also features several murals by Robert Reid depicting events crucial to the start of the American Revolution. Paul Revere's ride of April 19, 1775 is on the left, the Boston Tea Party is on the right. The central panel portrays the true beginning of the colonists' break with England. Fiery orator James Otis is pictured arguing against the Writs of Assistance, which allowed British soldiers to enter private homes and shops in search of smuggled goods. Refusing payment from the Boston merchants who retained him, Otis presented his case in February 1761. Although he did not win the case, Otis was described by John Adams as "a flame of fire... then and there the child Independence was born".





Hall of Flags

Memorial Hall or The Hall of Flags is a special place where all of our Massachusetts soldiers are honored and remembered.

"The Return of the Colors," shown in Edward Simmons' mural on your right, depicts the return of the flags that Governor Andrew had given the Massachusetts regiments as they departed to fight in the Civil War. This ceremony, which took place December 22, 1865, started a significant tradition called Forefather's Day.

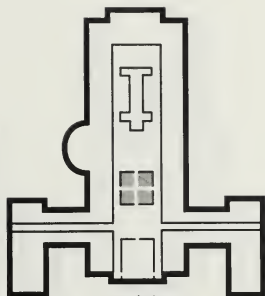
Flags have been returned after duty in every war since then including the Spanish-American War, World Wars I and II, the Korean War, the Berlin emergency, and the Vietnam War. This hall was built of beautiful Italian marble to appropriately display these flags.

If you take a close look you will see that these are transparencies of flags, not the actual flags. In 1987 the original flags were moved to environmentally controlled storage by textile conservators. There are over 400 flags in the State House collection. Some of the original flags will be back on display when the cases have been renovated.

Edward Simmons depicted the Battle of Concord in the mural to your left. In front of you is Henry Walker's por-

trayal of the Mayflower Pilgrims as they first sighted land. Behind you is Walker's interpretation of John Eliot preaching to the Native Americans. Eliot learned the Algonquin dialect, translated the Bible for the Indians, and established fourteen villages of "praying" Indians.

The stained glass skylight above contains the seals of the original thirteen colonies of the United States. The Massachusetts seal is in the center.

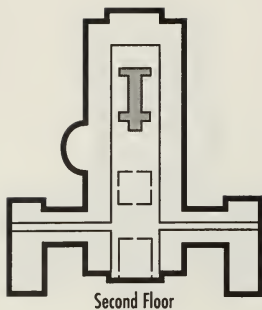


Second Floor

On his last day in office, January 4, 1884, Governor Benjamin Butler made the journey alone from the front door of the State House down the front steps, thus establishing the tradition of the "Long Walk". Since then, the middle doors of the State House are opened only to allow a governor who is ending a term of office to depart, or a president of the United States to enter.

Typically the governor takes his long walk alone. But at the end of Governor Michael Dukakis's term, he walked down escorted by his wife, Kitty Dukakis.





Second Floor

The Great Hall is the most recent 20th century addition to the inside of the State House while Ashburton Park is the newest addition to the outside. Located just behind the East Wing, the park highlights the monument designed by Charles Bulfinch to commemorate the events of the American Revolution. The height of the column is approximately the same height of the original Beacon Hill which was leveled off to create the landfill for Back Bay.



The Great Hall

If you walk just beyond the main staircase to the right and go through the glass doors, you will find the Great Hall. The Great Hall is the newest addition to the State House, completed in 1990. Previously it was an open space. It was built up from the basement and topped with a glass dome. This magnificent tricolored marbled hall is used for official state functions and receptions. The clock

was designed by R.M. Fischer, a New York artist, to serve as a functional piece of artwork. Fischer was inspired by the clocks that grace the town halls, churches and other meeting halls of New England. In an attempt to relate to the space surrounding the clock, he has employed many arcs and circles that echo the architectural elements of the building such as the arched doorways and circular patterns of the marbled floor. Lining the walls are the city and town flags representing the 351 cities and towns of Massachusetts.

Beneath the Great Hall are four new Legislative Hearing Rooms.



6

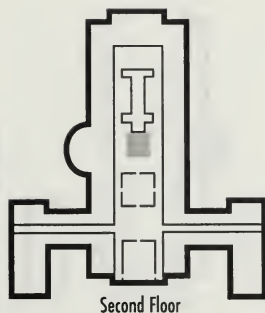
Main Staircase Window

Since its settlement, Massachusetts has had a series of state seals. The first is shown in the top pane of the painted and stained glass window. Designed in England for the original commercial enterprise that was the Massachusetts Bay Colony, the seal portrays – unrealistically – a Native American attired in a grass skirt voicing the plea, “Come Over and Help Us.”

When Massachusetts became part of the New England Royal Dominion in 1684 a new seal, shown below the first, was adopted. The family seals of the provincial governors appear on the two side panels and the Revolutionary seal is located at the bottom of the window. This seal portrays a colonist clutching the Magna Carta in one hand and a sword in the other. Our current state motto, “Ense petit placidam sub libertate quietem”, was adopted at that time. It means “By the sword we seek peace, but peace only under liberty.”

Massachusetts adopted its current seal in 1780 (pictured above right). It appears just above the Revolutionary seal. A more realistically dressed Na-

tive American is shown on a blue background standing below a drawn sword. The star over his shoulder indicates that Massachusetts is one of the original colonies. The motto of the commonwealth appears at the bottom of the seal.

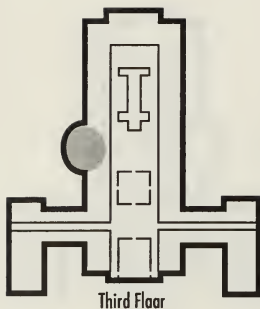


Second Floor

After the iron railings on the Main Staircase were cast, the molds were broken to ensure that the railings would be one of a kind.

Only four states are “commonwealths” – Kentucky, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts. Massachusetts chose this designation when its first constitution, the “Constitution of Massachusetts Bay” was turned down by the cities and towns. In order to differentiate the second constitution, which for the first time included a Bill of Rights, the Constitution Convention named it the “Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.”





Third Floor

On April 26, 1933 the Sacred Cod was "codnapped" from the House of Representatives by members of the Harvard Lampoon.

In 1921 Sylvia Donaldson and Susan Walker Fitzgerald became the first women to serve in the Massachusetts House. In 1936 Sybil Holmes became the first woman state senator.

In what is now the Senate Chamber, the House of Representatives convened for nearly a century. Here in 1858, the dramatic trial of Judge Edward Greeley Loring took place. Judge Loring was found guilty of breaking a state law after he ruled that Anthony Burns, an escaped slave, must be returned to his owner. Loring was removed from office and the brilliant prosecutor John Andrew, an ardent opponent of slavery, was elected governor of Massachusetts in 1859.



The Legislative Branch

The Massachusetts Legislature, or General Court, was established in 1644. It has two branches – the 40 member Senate and the 160 member House of Representatives.

Massachusetts became a Commonwealth in 1780 when it adopted its remarkable Constitution. This document included a ground-breaking Declaration of Rights and was a model for the Constitution of the United States. It is, in fact, the oldest written constitution in effect in the world today, although it has been amended more than 100 times.

All Massachusetts citizens have the right of free petition and may have bills introduced by a legislator. Bills receive a public hearing and a committee recommendation. They must be read, debated, and passed in both the House and the Senate before they are sent to the governor to be signed into law or vetoed.



House of Representatives

It is in this room that the larger of the two legislative bodies conducts its business. The Speaker of the House is elected by the representatives and presides from the elevated chair behind the podium. Representatives can vote electronically by pushing a green "yea" or a red "nay" button on their desks. The results of the vote appear next to each representative's name on the boards in the front of the room.

The room is paneled in Honduras mahogany. Behind the Speaker's po-

dium are the Albert Herter murals, "Milestones on the Road to Freedom." The names on the ceiling cornice commemorate men who made important contributions to the commonwealth and the nation prior to 1895.

Above are the galleries for the public, guests of the Speaker, and the press. Hanging over the public gallery is the famous Sacred Cod, symbolizing the importance of the fishing industry in the early Massachusetts economy. It was given to the House in 1784 by a Boston merchant, Jonathan Rowe.





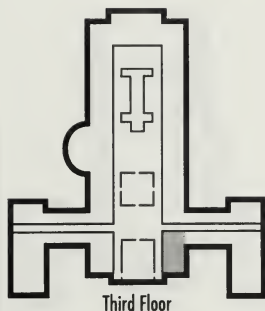
Senate Reception Room

Located in the Bulfinch Front, what is now the Senate Reception Room originally served as the Senate Chamber. Following the completion of the Brigham addition of 1895 the Senate moved across the hall to the former House of Representatives, and the House relocated to its present chamber.

Most of the elegant Bulfinch features may still be seen here. The four Ionic columns supporting the barrel-

vaulted ceiling are the only original columns standing in the Bulfinch Front today. Each was carved from a single pine tree.

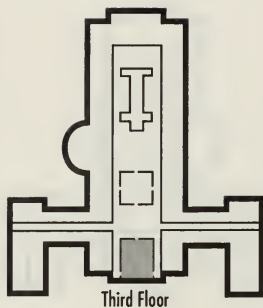
The paintings that line the walls of the Reception Room portray some of the former Senate presidents, including Calvin Coolidge and Horace Mann. This room is now used for conferences and occasional receptions.



In 1812 membership in the House of Representatives swelled to an incredible 749. Grandstand seating was required to seat them all.

Some of the engaged columns in the Senate Reception Room (those embedded in the wall) filled in the spaces that were left when fireplaces were removed following the installation of central heating in the 1860s.

The face of the State House has changed with fashion. The original red brick was painted white in 1825, yellow in the mid-1880s to match a new addition, and white again in 1917. When most of the other historic buildings in Boston had been restored to their natural brick hue, the State House finally followed suit in 1927.



Third Floor

"I stand before you as a moral being, endowed with precious and unalienable rights, which are correlative with solemn duties and high responsibilities; and as a moral being I feel that I owe it to the suffering slave, and to the deluded master, to my country and my world to do all that I can to overturn a system of complicated crimes, built up upon the broken hearts and prostrate bodies of my countrymen in chains, and cemented by the blood and sweat and tears of my sisters in bonds."

Angelina Grimke
February 21, 1838

The bust of Washington at the front of the Senate Chamber was at one time thought to be of Samuel Adams. The identity crisis was cleared up with the help of Lafayette, who commented, "That's the Washington I knew!"



Senate Chamber

Directly below the golden dome is the Senate Chamber. There are forty Senators, thirty-nine of whom sit around the circle of desks. The fortieth, the Senate President, is elected by the senators and sits at the rostrum under a golden eagle. Voting in the Senate is still done by voice.

Most of the room has been changed from the original Bulfinch design but the sunburst ceiling remains the same. Emblems symbolizing commerce, agriculture, war, and peace are located in the four corners of the ceiling.

High above the chamber are the public galleries. Marble busts of state and national figures stand in the wall

niches. Busts of Presidents Washington and Lincoln are situated behind the Senate President's desk. Near the visitors area is a bust of Marquis de Lafayette, a great friend of the American people, who visited the chamber on his way to lay the cornerstone for the Bunker Hill Monument in 1825.

Several presidents – including Jackson, Monroe and Van Buren – were welcomed here. It was in this chamber, too, that Angelina Grimke made political history when, in 1838, she gave a speech advocating the abolition of slavery. She was the first woman to address a United States legislative body.



The Executive Branch

Massachusetts' chief executive officer, the governor, is assisted by a cabinet and a governor's council. Each cabinet secretary is appointed by the governor and is responsible for the implementation of policy in the departments under his or her jurisdiction. The eight members of the Governor's Council approve gubernatorial judicial appointments and pardons, as well as expenditures from the treasury.



Executive Offices

The Governor's Waiting Room

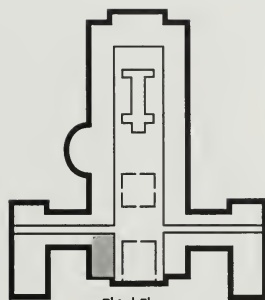
Portraits of recent governors hang in this room. If you enter the short hall to the right, you will see a portrait of George Washington. It was copied by Francis Alexander from an original painted by Gilbert Stuart. Since Stuart's portrait was the model for Washington's later portraits, it was left unfinished. Stuart's portrait was also the model for the likeness of Washington on the dollar bill.

The Governor's Office

To the left at the end of the hall is the governor's office (pictured below). Stucco ornaments symbolizing the arts, liberty, justice, and executive powers decorate the walls. The portrait of a predecessor, selected by the incumbent governor, hangs over the Connemara marble fireplace behind the desk.

Council Chamber and Cabinet Room

Across the hall is the room used for meetings by both the Council and the Cabinet.



Third Floor

The curtain in the middle of the south wall of the Senate Chamber, directly opposite the Senate President's chair, is used only by the Governor to enter the Senate when it is in session. The curtain conceals the entrance to a hall which connects the Governor's office directly to the Senate.

Every governor has the opportunity to choose a portrait of a former governor to hang over the mantel in his office. Governor Dukakis had chosen Samuel Adams and Governor Weld chose James Michael Curley.



The Archives and Commonwealth Museum

Located in Boston at Columbia Point (next to the JFK Library), the building housing the Massachusetts Archives and the Commonwealth Museum is easily accessible by the MBTA Red line.

The Commonwealth Museum offers to visitors the opportunity to travel back in time, consider what makes the Commonwealth so uncommon, research family origins, and explore the

history of their Massachusetts town.

The Massachusetts Archives is the repository of more than 370 years of Massachusetts history, housing both historical artifacts and documents as well as preserving access to state government records that are of long-term value to support government operations. For more information call (617) 727-9150



Information about Massachusetts State House Tours

Massachusetts State House tours are conducted by the staff of the Tours and Government Education Division of the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and by volunteers well-versed in the history and architectural background of the State House. The tours are given weekdays year-round from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm, and are free of charge. The last tour departs at 3:30pm.

Legislative process tours and foreign language tours are available by prior arrangement.

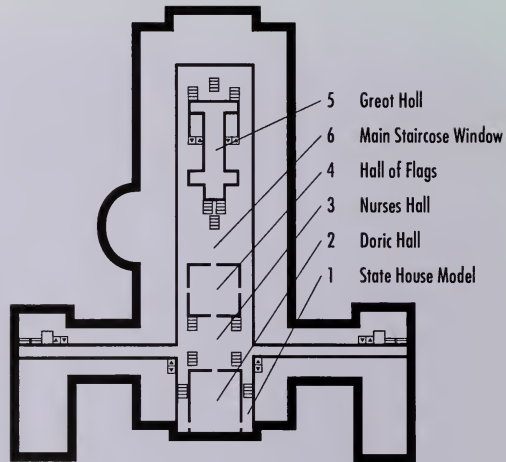
Instructional aids are available for teachers planning tours of the State House. They are sent at the time the tour is booked. Educational material is also available on request for teachers who have included units on state government in their curriculum.

Tours for school classes and other groups of ten or more should be scheduled at least three weeks in advance.

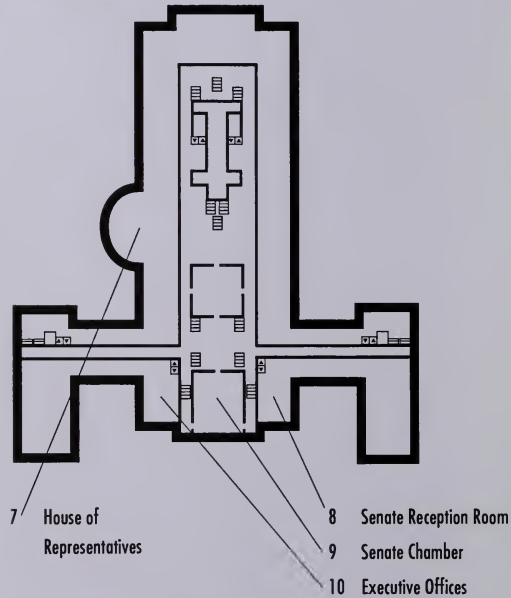
Please address inquiries to the Director of State House Tours and Government Education Division at the office of:

William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth
State House, Room 194
Boston, MA 02133
(617) 727-3676

Second Floor



Third Floor



Published by
William Francis Galvin
 Secretary of the Commonwealth
 State House Tours and Government
 Education Division

updated 12/96